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Department of Agriculture

The Pine Barrens

of

New Jersey

J. M. BASSETT

Hammonton, N. J.

U. S. A.

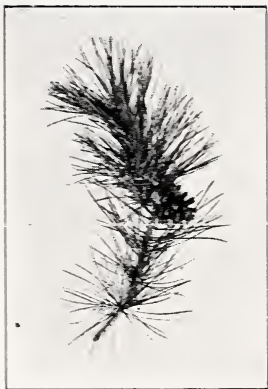
SCHIZAEA PUSILLA

(CURLY GRASS)

This curious little fern, which bears so little resemblance to a fern as popularly understood, has long been most prized among the many botanical rarities of the Pine Barrens. It was first discovered in 1805 at Quaker Bridge, where an Inn well-known to the botanists of old, offered shelter to those who wished to stop over night on their way to the coast. Situated as it was in the very heart of this interesting country, it furnished one of the few available stopping places for those who wished to study the flora or fauna of the Pines, and who in the absence of the railroads were unable to return to Philadelphia at night. It thus became the only known station for many species of plants which were later found to have a much wider distribution. With the coming of the railroad and the abandonment of the old wagon roads to the sea, the old hostelry at Quaker Bridge disappeared, as did other similar buildings, so that the spot is now more of a wilderness and less accessible than it was a century ago.

The party who had the good fortune to discover the *Schizaea* consisted of Dr. C. W. Eddy, J. LeConte, Fredr'k Pursh and C. Whitlow. Pursh described the curious little plant in his flora in 1814, leaving one to infer that he alone was the discoverer ; but Rafinesque in his review of Pursh's work states that he did not find any of the specimens and that he described the plant without permission of the real discoverer. Dr. Torrey has confirmed the first part of this statement, saying that Dr. Eddy was the discoverer and that LeConte was the only other member of the party to find any other specimen. The plant was apparently not found again until 1818, when Dr. Torrey and Wm. Cooper drove from Philadelphia to South Amboy, by way of Quaker Bridge and Monmouth spending a week in the Pines, while Dr. Torrey made his first acquaintance with the peculiar flora.

Owing to the scarcity of this little plant, it is available only in a small way as a curiosity or specimen. Some of the old localities are vanishing.



PINUS ECHINATA